

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

POLICY GUIDE 2015.08

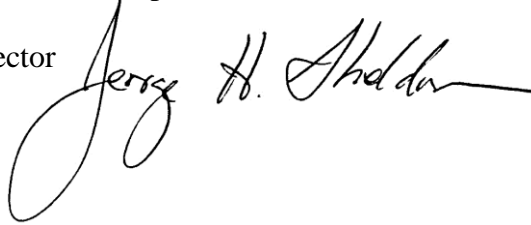
ENHANCED FIREARM SAFETY IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES

DATE: May 1, 2015

TO: All DCFS and Private Agency Staff and Supervisors

FROM: George H. Sheldon, Acting Director

EFFECTIVE: Immediately



I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to inform Department and Purchase of Services (POS) licensing staff of new requirements for the safe storage of firearms in foster family homes.

II. PRIMARY USERS

The primary users of this Policy Guide are Department and POS licensing and placement staff.

III. BACKGROUND

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommended requiring trigger locks and other enhanced safe storage practices for all firearms in foster family homes. These recommendations were made subsequent to an investigation of a foster youth who died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound after the youth found keys to his foster parents' gun cabinet. The OIG also completed an in-depth literature review of youth suicide that contributed in making these recommendations.

This Policy Guide summarizes the Department's new policy requirements for ensuring that the OIG's safety recommendations are followed by foster family homes.

IV. SUMMARY

The Department's licensing standards currently require firearms in foster family homes to be locked up at all times and kept in places inaccessible to children.



This Policy Guide adds greater levels of safety by implementing the Department's new policy requirements that:

- Licensing representatives shall request and recommend that foster parents store any and all firearms outside the foster home and its property;
- Any and all firearms and ammunition stored in the foster home, contrary to the recommendation to store them outside of the foster home, shall be unloaded and secured in separate and locked storage receptacles specifically manufactured to keep firearms and ammunition secure;
- Trigger locks shall be used on all firearms and shall be cross-checked by the foster parent to ensure the trigger lock model used has not been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission; and
- Any keys needed to access said firearms and ammunition must be kept with the owner or stored outside the foster home and shall not be shared with anyone.

This new policy does not affect language in the current rule that states: "Loaded guns shall not be kept in a foster home unless required by law enforcement officers and in accordance with their law enforcement agency's safety precautions."

The Department will propose amendments to **Part 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes**, and make revisions to **Procedures 402** to ensure consistency with this Policy Guide.

Licensing staff shall immediately implement the new standards.

V. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide may be directed to the Office of Child and Family Policy at 217-524-1983 or via Outlook at OCFP – Mailbox. Non Outlook users may e-mail questions to cfpolicy@idcfs.state.il.us.

VI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide immediately following **Part 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes**.